



Avaya Unified Communications Solution Puts Patrick Automotive Group in the Driver's Seat



The modern retail space doesn't get much more competitive than automotive sales. Just ask Andrew McClure, Systems and Training director for the Patrick Automotive Group, and a 30-year industry veteran.

"The margins and pressures in our industry are such that we need to modernize to survive, and that means embracing technology," explains McClure. "Automotive sales is typically five-to-ten years behind the technology curve, and a lot of people in the industry fail to recognize that our number-one lead source is the phone customer. So, a modern, full-featured business communications solution is key to staying competitive."

The Patrick Automotive Group has been serving the greater Chicago area for more than 40 years. It has eight brands at five retail locations and two certified collision centers, employing 450 people. The company's tag line is 'taking care of you every day,' and a recently deployed Avaya unified communications solution is helping its employees live up to that commitment.

"The end-to-end management of the customer experience is critically important, and that's what our Avaya phone system offers us," says McClure. "With our Avaya solution, we're at the leading edge of our industry in modern retail."

With Powered by Avaya IP Office™, the Patrick Automotive Group connects callers quickly with the right representative and is able to use data from all of its customer interactions to make smart business decisions.

Shifting Gears

Before Avaya, the Patrick Automotive Group was relying on a vintage phone system that hadn't been upgraded and maintained. But, as McClure explains, the more pressing issue was the system's lack of reporting features.



Challenges

- Leverage unified communications solution to tap into industry's biggest source of leads
- Position company to compete most effectively in highly-competitive automotive retail market
- Gain reliable reporting for a clear picture of ROI
- Harness the power of latest CRM tools

"We didn't have the reporting capability to give us insight into how well the business was doing, if the system was fully supporting the opportunities coming in, and if we had the right people in the chair doing the right things with the calls," he says. "Close to 40 percent of the call flow was not being managed well. We weren't certain it was being captured, much of it was just simply lost."

McClure presented Patrick Automotive Group with a 5-year plan that addressed all aspects of its infrastructure, including Avaya IP Office sitting on the newly implemented voice-specific VLAN. He reports that the impact of that transition was immediate.

"This has been the most impactful change. We've seen double digit growth across every channel of our business, with all of our brands enjoying improved market share. This year is on track to be the most profitable year this business has had, and a lot of that success is directly attributable to our new Avaya solution."

McClure has a long history with Avaya and discusses why implementing the company's solutions was an easy choice for The Patrick Dealer Group.

"I've always been a fan of Avaya's products, they're virtually plug-and-play and very user friendly," he says. "But most important, the Avaya solution reaps almost immediate rewards."

Driven to find the right partners

Partners played a key role in the Patrick Automotive Group unified communications roll out.

"All of our partners in this whole environment were fantastic to work with. We immediately saw the synergy between Avaya Cloud Specialist business partner Converging Networks Group, Inc. and TelAgility Hosting, and had a great experience working with Synnex Professional Services on the programming side," says McClure. "CNG, TelAgility and Synnex absolutely delivered."

Integration partnerships have also added tremendous value to the solution.

Value Created

- 15% growth projected for the year
- Reporting features that have resulted in:
 - Insight into how to best spend money with third-party partners
 - Marketplace differentiation based on superior customer experience
- Improved customer engagement leading to:
 - Increased conversion of calls to appointments and visits to the business
 - Higher sales of new and used cars, parts and service
- Access to latest mobility applications, resulting in a call capture rate of more than 96 percent

McClure deployed RSI's Shadow Collaboration Management Solution (CMS) in concert with Avaya IP Office, providing easy access to dashboards, metrics and automated reporting for Patrick Automotive Group's management team.

"We currently have 50 licenses for CMS because I've got an engaged management team. They're looking at their team's results daily and monthly," says McClure. "And we're continuously tweaking, training, and retraining our people based on the CMS data to make sure that we're getting the most out of every opportunity."

Patrick Automotive Group's Business Development Centers (BDC) spearhead the company's effort to manage the customer lifecycle. This means keeping them engaged as a customer, ideally reselling them eight or ten cars across a lifetime, and managing all of their service, parts, and accessories needs. The BDC group works actively in the VinSolutions automotive dealership omnichannel CRM tool.

"VinSolutions offers automotive-specific CRM with an incredible level of management of customer data," explains McClure. "The BDC folks reach out to clients over the phone and through email and direct mail. Having that software system in place and integrated with Avaya IP Office is very important."

Green light for growth

"The biggest differentiator a car dealership has is the customer experience," says McClure. "That's where the phone is critical to our business, because how we engage the client in the first 15-to-45 seconds is everything in terms of their decision to go with us."

The Avaya solution tells the customer-facing team everything they need to know about the caller. That could be information about whether it's a new or pre-existing customer, and if they came from the company website, a third-party marketing partner or another online source.

"With the Avaya platform, all of this information is there for the agent, it helps them open up the conversation in the best way and that makes the customer feel very welcome," explains McClure.

The Avaya solution has worked so well that Patrick Automotive Group has added 55 new headcounts to handle all its new business.

"The solution provided by Avaya and our partners has facilitated substantial growth across both the sales and the service sides of the business," says McClure.

Patrick Automotive Group expects 15-percent growth this year and has experienced a significant uptick in conversion of phone calls to appointments and visits to the business. From those appointments and visits, actual sales of new and used cars, parts and service have also increased.

Patrick Automotive Group's unified communications roll out is also helping the company decide where to best spend its money with third-party partners.

"We can see absolutely every call: where it came from, where they were at the time that they saw our number," says McClure. "We have that complete end-to-end management ability, but more importantly, the ability to convert it quickly into a very clear picture of ROI."

Mobility and voicemail to email have proven two of the most popular features with end users.

"It's amazing how voicemail to email has become such a powerful tool to engage and stay engaged with clients," says McClure. "Mobility has freed

“This year is on track to be the most profitable year this business has had, and a lot of that success is directly attributable to our new Avaya solution.”

– Andrew McClure, Systems and Training director, Patrick Automotive Group

Solutions

- Powered by Avaya IP Office

up our people to not feel desk-bound, and it has increased our call capture rate to more than 96 percent.”

The road ahead

As an industry expert, McClure is often asked his opinion about cloud-based unified communications in the automotive dealership environment.

“For anyone who is considering making the transition to a hosted system, I tell them that it offers just an incredible amount of information,” he says. “It gives you the opportunity to have end-to-end management of your customer experience on the phone.”

“The retail automotive industry is a competitive one,” sums up McClure. “The ability to see and control all the variables in this business is critically important to success. There’s a lot of consolidation going on and at some point, that’s what’s going to determine a successful retailer.”

About Patrick Automotive Group

With a hundred year plus history of excellence, The Patrick Dealer Group has proudly served Chicagoland since 1977, offering everything from premium pre-owned vehicles to the latest, cutting edge luxury vehicles, and much more. Chicagoland buyers in the know count on these dealers for their distinctive brands, expert advice, extraordinary service and a relentless commitment to customer satisfaction. As family-owned and operated car dealers in Chicago for many years and a legacy reaching back to Henry Ford—we know that a truly outstanding luxury car buying experience takes more than flash and sizzle. It takes dedication, knowledgeable staff, and an ongoing devotion to our customers. That’s “the Patrick Promise.”

About Avaya

Businesses are built on the experiences they provide and every day millions of those experiences are built by Avaya (NYSE:AVYA). For over one hundred years, we’ve enabled organizations around the globe to win—by creating intelligent communications experiences for customers and employees. Avaya builds open, converged and innovative solutions to enhance and simplify communications and collaboration—in the cloud, on premise, or a hybrid of both. To grow your business, we’re committed to innovation, partnership, and a relentless focus on what’s next. We’re the technology company you trust to help you deliver Experiences that Matter. Visit us at www.avaya.com.